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9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section concerns the principles of health and hospital developments. For details of the particular hospital sites and their land use allocations, please refer to Section 14.0, Development Sites and Appendix 10.

9.1.2 The provision of health services in Oxford is primarily the responsibility of the various National Health Service (NHS) Trusts. The main providers in Oxford are:

- The Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust;
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust;
- Oxfordshire Mental Health Care NHS Trust;
- Oxford City Primary Care NHS Trust;
- Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust; and
- Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust.

9.1.3 The NHS provides most health services in Oxford. However, there are also private facilities, both on the hospital sites administered by the health care trusts and at the Manor Hospital, London Road. There has also been a rapid growth in the number of premises providing complementary and alternative medicine.

9.2 Primary Care

9.2.1 Good local facilities are vital to health care. The number of doctors' surgeries/health centres, pharmacies and opticians providing family health services in Oxford is generally considered to be adequate. However, many of the buildings are out of date, too small and not easily accessible. This applies, for example, to the Jericho Health Centre where a site at the Radcliffe Infirmary has been identified for a replacement facility. Land has been identified for the expansion of Donnington Health Centre on the former Donnington School site. The City Council will support the improvement of facilities on other sites where there is a shortage of space and the facilities require modernisation.

POLICY HH.1 - PROTECTION OF PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Planning permission will not be granted for developments that would result in the loss of premises used for the provision of medical or primary health services, except where provision is made for the retention or replacement of existing facilities either on site, or in another equally accessible and suitable location.

9.2.2 The provision of primary health care and alternative therapies are expected to change during the Plan period, so the Local Plan must have sufficient flexibility to enable suitable facilities to be provided in response to changing circumstances, while ensuring that they would not cause unacceptable environmental problems.

9.2.3 Change of use of non-residential buildings to primary care facilities and alternative therapies may be considered appropriate in suitable locations where there is no conflict with protected land uses and other policies in the Plan. Whilst the City Council recognises the value of local health services, the pressure on Oxford's housing stock is so great that the City Council will not normally approve proposals that involve the loss of homes to health care facilities. Partial loss of residential floorspace may be considered appropriate when it makes primary care facilities more accessible for local communities and the criteria of Policy HH.3 are met.

9.2.4 When considering the development of health care facilities in non-residential buildings, please also refer to Policies RC.2, RC.4 and RC.8 in Section 12.0, Retail and Commercial Leisure.

9.2.5 The City Council will also support the provision of new purpose built primary health care facilities on suitable sites where this would not conflict with other policies in this Plan. Appendix 10 lists sites allocated for this purpose.

POLICY HH.2 - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS AND NEW PURPOSE BUILT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

Planning permission will be granted for a change of use of a non-residential building to a medical or health facility or for the provision of new purpose built facilities, where the proposed development meets the following criteria:

- a. the provision of adequate on site parking with suitable safe access;
- b. the development will not cause undue noise or disturbance to neighbouring properties;
- c. the site is realistically accessible by walking, cycling and public transport for the majority of people travelling to the site.

This is subject to no conflict with protected land uses and other policies in the Plan.

POLICY HH.3 - PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FACILITIES IN RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS

The City Council will not permit the loss of residential dwellings, but planning permission may be granted for a change of use for part of a residential dwelling where the proposed development meets the following criteria:

- a. a substantial proportion of the residential dwelling is retained in residential use;
- b. the development would not lead to unacceptable traffic or highway problems;
- c. adequate provision for access and dropping off facilities is made;
- d. the site is accessible by walking, cycling or public transport for the majority of people travelling to the site; and
- e. the use would not unacceptably affect the amenity of occupants and neighbouring properties. This will depend on:
 - i. the scale of the proposal;
 - ii. the location and residential character of the area;
 - iii. the relationship to adjacent dwellings; and
 - iv. adequate sound proofing measures to safeguard the amenities of both the occupant and adjoining neighbours.

9.3 Hospitals

9.3.1 The hospitals are among the largest employers in the Oxford area; they deal with large numbers of patients, and have many visitors. Both the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University work closely with the hospitals to provide high standards of teaching, training and medical and clinical research. The future of the hospitals and hospital related services are a key Local Plan issue.

9.3.2 The NHS Trusts wish to rationalise hospital services in Oxford to improve health care, and make more efficient use of health care resources. A key part of this strategy is to relocate services from the Radcliffe Infirmary to the hospital sites in Headington, which is known as the Headington Strategy. The University of Oxford facilities currently located on the Radcliffe Infirmary site will also be relocated as part of this strategy.

9.3.3 The NHS has embarked on a period of modernisation, with far-reaching implications for health care in Oxford. This will require new buildings, modification of existing buildings, new equipment and increased staffing in order to provide flexibility to respond to future developments in the delivery of health care. While making this investment, the NHS will dispose of surplus health care sites.

9.3.4 Most of this development should be concentrated on the existing hospital sites at the John Radcliffe, Churchill Hospital, Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Warneford Hospital and Park Hospital sites. Generally, hospital facilities should be concentrated in the Headington area, except for mental health care, although some non-medical facilities could be located on suitable sites elsewhere. A modern facility has been established at the Littlemore Mental Health Centre in Sandford Road and there is scope for further development both on this site and on the field at the rear which is allocated for health care facilities. Locating some further new mental health care facilities in Littlemore should make land available at the existing Warneford and Park Hospital sites for other uses that need to be located in the Headington area. As many people travel to the hospital sites improving public transport links to and within the hospital sites will be a key element of future development proposals.

9.3.5 The NHS Trusts must remain flexible and responsive to evolving Government policy and initiatives. This makes it difficult to be specific about longer-term proposals for their development, particularly during the later part of the Plan period. The Local Plan must be flexible enough to enable the hospitals to respond to changing circumstances while ensuring that development will also be acceptable.

9.3.6 Section 14.0, Development Sites, contains details of the type of development that will be granted planning permission on each of the following sites:

- Churchill Hospital,
- John Radcliffe,
- Littlemore Mental Health Centre,
- Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre,
- Park Hospital,
- Warneford Hospital,
- Warneford Meadow.

Transport Strategy

9.3.7 The Health Integrated Transport Strategy (HITS) was set up by a partnership of the NHS Trusts, Oxford Brookes University and Oxford University. HITS sets out the agreed

framework for meeting the transport needs of these major Headington based organisations. With a commitment to on-going monitoring and review by the Trusts, HITS should achieve a better balance between numbers of people travelling by car and those travelling by other more sustainable modes. This commitment to reducing car travel to the various sites will be an important requirement for progress on further proposals.

9.3.8 For patients, their helpers, and many visitors, car travel is often the only realistic option and often takes place outside the peak traffic periods. Therefore the City Council's main concern is the impact of travel by staff and students and how to manage it.

9.3.9 Traffic difficulties arising from poor or congested access are key factors in determining the capacity of the hospital sites and the balance between the sites. Adequate public transport, cycle and pedestrian facilities and a complementary on-site parking policy operated by the Trusts will help reduce the demand for unnecessary travel by car. In pursuing sustainable development, sites will need to accommodate a mix of uses, for example combining student and staff accommodation with medical, teaching and research facilities, which would reduce the need to travel.

9.4 Ambulance Service

9.4.1 The Ambulance Service is presently based at the Churchill site and has a pressing need to relocate to an alternative site. The Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust is considering centralising these facilities on a single site closer to the ring road to improve efficiency and emergency response times. This move would also require the relocation of the services' communication mast. The City Council considers that there would be considerable benefits in relocating the Ambulance Service to a more suitable site, both in terms of improving its operational efficiency and also releasing land on the Churchill Hospital site for other health related uses such as health care facilities, medical research or staff accommodation for nurses and other key workers associated with the health service. The City Council will support the relocation of the Ambulance Service to a suitable site with good access to the road network. Relocation to an appropriate employment-generating site would, in principle, be supported.

9.4.2 The County Trading Estate, off Watlington Road, could offer scope for relocation of the Ambulance Service, when the area has been reorganised, but no specific site here has yet been identified.

9.5 Medical Research

9.5.1 The University of Oxford currently occupies floor space on the hospital sites and on the former Area Health Authority site off Old Road. During the Plan period, University developments are likely to take place on the hospital sites, particularly to accommodate the expansion of the Weatherall Institute of Molecular Medicine at the John Radcliffe Hospital, and on the former Area Health Authority site. The University is likely to require additional land for medical research facilities during the Plan period. While some medical teaching and research can be undertaken away from hospital sites, some of it cannot, as it requires access to hospital facilities, and many University staff give clinical support to the hospitals as well as undertaking research and teaching.

9.5.2 The City Council acknowledges that medical research is of fundamental importance. However, it does not consider that it should be allowed to take over all land surplus to the health trusts' requirements, because of the pressing need to provide additional student accommodation and the forecasted need for additional teaching/administration floorspace for Oxford Brookes University. The Warneford Meadow site is allocated for medical research, nurses' accommodation, other key worker housing, and health care facilities. Details of this proposal are contained in Section 14.0, Development Sites.